Service-Learning & Student Civic Engagement: Journeys toward Discovery, Contribution & Civic Responsibility

NAPSA--Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
Membership Call
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What is service-learning?

Intentional student engagement that combines community service with academic instruction and/or co-curricular learning that is focused on critical, reflective thinking and civic responsibility.

(Definition adapted from Campus Compact, http://www.compact.org/)
What is service-learning? (cont’)

Service-learning programs involve students in organized community service that addresses local needs, while developing their academic and life skills, sense of civic responsibility and commitment to the community.

(adapted from Campus Compact, http://www.compact.org/)
Three general characteristics of service-learning:

- It is based on the experience of meeting needs in the community.
- It incorporates reflection and learning.
- It contributes to students' interest in and understanding of community life.

Adapted: Bringle, Robert and Julie Hatcher. “A Service Learning Curriculum for Faculty,” in: Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 2, pp. 112-122.

http://www.compact.org/help/glossary
Note: Similar construct in Where's the Learning in Service-Learning, Eyler and Giles, Jossey-Bass 1999
What is Civic Engagement?

Individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern.


Key components:

• Incorporates the essentials of service-learning, but also, critically, includes -
• Exploration of underlying/prevailing social issues
• Context of “self” in the equation in a way that stresses and strengthens reciprocity with community
• May be service-oriented, but not exclusively --
• Additional components, such as action research and community dialogue can be/are integrated.
How do students engage?

• Academic/course-connected service-learning & civic engagement
• Curricular service-learning
• Co-curricular service-learning & community engagement:
  - Individual action
  - Student-led initiatives
Operational Definitions at MSU:

• **Academic Service-Learning:**
  A teaching method that combines community service with academic instruction as it focuses on critical, reflective thinking and civic responsibility.
  (campuscompact.org)

• **Curricular Service-Learning:** Service/engagement opportunity distinctly connected to an academic major/program, but not a particular course. Examples include pre-nursing, pre-med students who serve in hospitals and health clinics; finance majors who choose to participate in VITA.
Operational Definitions at MSU (cont’):

- **Co-curricular Service-Learning & Civic Engagement:**

  Co-curricular service experiences provide students with opportunities to volunteer through community-based placements in personal areas of interest that may be unrelated to courses or academic majors. Many of these opportunities are available through student-led initiatives dedicated to service, community and civic engagement, and advocacy.

  [http://outreach.msu.edu/factsheet.asp](http://outreach.msu.edu/factsheet.asp)
Operational Definitions at MSU (cont’):

• Co-curricular cont’.
  - Individual Action:
    ‘ Linked to personal interests and motivation - “I want to “do something” after Hurricane Katrina”.
    “I am an engineering major, but I just miss working with kids.”
Operational definitions cont’.

• Co-Curricular, cont’:
  - Student-led Initiatives:
    Formal or informal student organization/group activities that are focused on service community engagement. ‘Generally advised in some way by faculty or staff:
    • Alternative Spring Break
    • Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)
    • “Into the Streets”/COOL Action-type
    • Residence Hall Floor “Adopt-a-School”, etc.
Where do they serve?

Alternative Breaks
Communication
Community Administration
Community Nutrition
Community Projects & “Into the Streets”
Education and Special Education
Engineering and Construction
Hospitals and Health Services
Mental Health and Human Services
Museums and Cultural Arts
Pre-School and Day Care
Recreation Leadership
Youth Mentoring
Senior Citizens
Spartan Smart$tatements
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

Local & Global
Why do we Engage?

It’s in the Mission!

• For MSU: is “pioneer” Land-Grant, now land-grant to world-grant, creating global citizens

• Private R1’s: Stanford: …. studies and exercises directed to the cultivation and enlargement of the mind: Its object, to qualify its students for personal success, and direct usefulness in life; And its purposes, to promote the public welfare …

Why do we Engage? (cont’)

• Accreditation
  - Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association: Criterion Five
    http://www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org/download/Overview07.pdf
  - Carnegie Classification-Community Engagement (optional)
    http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/classifications/index.asp?key=1213

• Increased Learning and Retention
  - Numerous studies
    http://www.servicelearning.msu.edu/faculty/academic-service-learning

• It’s the “Right Thing to Do”!
Infrastructure Support

- Some form of institutional support is critical for success!
- Models of support and implementation vary widely. At MSU the CSLCE is university-wide, Board-mandated and jointly administered between the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs and Services and the Office of the Associate Provost for Outreach and Engagement.
- No “right way” to organize, but support and infrastructure for engagement is vital.
- Preparation, e.g. http://outreach.msu.edu/tools/ and monitoring are key.
- Includes collaboration not only with and between student affairs/services and academics, but entities such as Risk Management.
YouVote: Example of Collaboration

- Borne from a campus-community problem - 2000 “Motor Voter” Election
- Also Higher Ed. Reauthorization Act
- City & MSU collaborated!
- Numerous campus partners: academic, student services, governmental affairs, student-led, operations.
- Shared “Ownership”!
- Successful & Sustained
You make a living by what you get.
You make a life by what you give.

Winston Churchill
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